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SUBJECT: GHANA SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

REF: A. STATE 164134

[1](#)B. STATE 153802

Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) On September 15, Charge delivered Ref A points on seeking Ghanaian participation in an international partnership on Avian Influenza to Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kwasi Osei-Adjei and Deputy Minister of Health Sam Owusu-Agyei. Deputy Foreign Minister Osei-Adjei promised to coordinate closely with the health services and also agreed to pass the points to President Kufuor's staff. Deputy Health Minister Owusu-Agyei assured that Ghana would participate in efforts to monitor and combat Avian Influenza, but noted that Ghana has insufficient resources to mitigate effectively a potential outbreak. The U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit (NAMRU) in Ghana has agreed to provide support and coordinate on setting up a national influenza center in Ghana. End Summary.

Avian Influenza Demarche Delivered

[1](#)2. (SBU) On September 15, Charge Jerry Lanier, EconChief Chris Landberg, and Dr. Gregory Raczniak, Officer in Charge of NAMRU in Ghana, met with Deputy Health Minister Owusu-Agyei and Public Health Director Dr. George Amofah to urge GoG support for U.S. initiatives on Avian Influenza. (Note: Charge also provided a non-paper based on Ref B points on addressing the threat of Avian Influenza, which Post delivered as a diplomatic note August 23, 2005. End Note).

[1](#)3. (SBU) Charge separately delivered the same points and background material to Deputy Foreign Minister Osei-Adjei, urging political-level support for the Avian Influenza partnership. Osei-Adjei said he would convey the points to President Kufuor's party, at that time in New York City attending the UN meeting. He also agreed to liaise with the Health Ministry and other health services to emphasize the importance of monitoring Avian Influenza and also to encourage international cooperation.

Health Ministry Issues and NAMRU Support

[1](#)4. (SBU) Although Deputy Health Minister Owusu-Agyei and Public Health Director Amofah were supportive of the concept of an international partnership to combat Avian Influenza, they said their major challenge was a lack of resources. Owusu-Agyei noted the huge burden of fighting disease on countries like Ghana, and said the GoG had insufficient resources even to provide effective surveillance of any potential outbreak. He concluded that Ghana would need outside support to initiate preventative actions, beyond mere surveillance and detection.

[1](#)5. (SBU) NAMRU OIC Dr. Raczniak briefed Owusu-Agyei and Dr. Amofah on the resources available to them (possibly including simple surveillance equipment) through the Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 in Cairo, Egypt. Raczniak stated that the DoD Global Emerging Infectious Disease Surveillance system (GEISS) has collaborated with the WHO and over 60 Ministries of Health across Asia, Eastern Europe and Middle East in setting up national influenza centers. The NAMRU3 surveillance network has been working with Health Ministries in Africa to establish a similar collaborative effort, and Dr. Raczniak recommended establishing a center in Ghana. He noted that one important aspect of this network is information sharing, with NAMRU3 receiving diagnostic samples, isolates and aggregated epidemiological information to fulfill the GEISS and WHO goals. Owusu-Agyei and Dr. Amofah eagerly welcomed the initiative. Dr. Raczniak agreed to coordinate the project with Dr. Amofah and the Ghanaian surveillance unit.

LANIER